

Group I: Claims 1, 11, and 21, characterized by the Examiner as being drawn to a vehicle information system;

Group II: Claims 2, 3, 12, and 13, characterized by the Examiner as being drawn to a vehicle indication system;

Group III: Claims 4-8 and 14-18, characterized by the Examiner as being drawn to a vehicle communication system;

Group IV: Claims 9, 10, 19, and 20, characterized by the Examiner as being drawn to a vehicle navigation system.

Applicants elect to prosecute Group I, claims 1, 11, and 21, with traverse.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's characterization of the subject matter of the claims and submits that the groupings of the claims is improper. Claim 1 is drawn to a vehicle information processing method. Claims 12-10 depend from claim 1 and are similarly drawn to a vehicle information processing method. Claim 11 is drawn to a vehicle information processing apparatus. Claims 2-20 depend from claim 11 and are similarly drawn to a vehicle information processing apparatus. Claim 21 is a vehicle loaded with the vehicle information processing apparatus of claim 11. Thus, claims 1-10 and 11-21 are not unconnected or "independent" as defined in M.P.E.P. § 802.01. Thus, the groupings of the claims as set forth in the Office Action is improper, and applicants respectfully submit the restriction requirement should be withdrawn.

Further, applicants submit that the subject matter of claims 1-21 is sufficiently related that a thorough search of the subject matter of any one of Groups I-IV would encompass a search for the subject matter of the remaining claims. Thus, a search and

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examination of the non-elected claims of Group II-IV would not place a serious burden on the Examiner. M.P.E.P. § 803 states that "[i]f the search and examination of the entire application can be made without serious burden, the examiner must examine it on the merits." (Emphasis added.) Applicants respectfully submit that this policy should be applied in the present application to avoid unnecessary delay and expense to the applicants and duplicative examination by the Patent Office.

Accordingly, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the restriction requirement. If the Examiner does not withdraw the restriction requirement, applicants reserve the right to prosecute the non-elected claims either in view of their dependence from the elected Group I or in a divisional application.

The Examiner also required restriction under 35 U.S.C. § 121 to a single disclosed species. Applicants again elect Group I and submit that claim 1 is generic and claim 11 is generic. Applicants further submit that claims 2-10 are related to generic claim 1 and claims 12-21 are related to generic claim 11. Moreover, applicants disagree with the Examiner's characterizations of the claims. Because Groups II-IV are dependent on claims of Group I, clearly none of the groupings of invention "lack" Invention I, as asserted by the Examiner in the Office Action. Upon the allowance of the generic claims of Group I, applicants reserve the right to request consideration of the non-elected claims written in dependent form as provided by 37 C.F.R. § 1.141.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

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